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Training through poetry within the sample of Nabi's "Hayriyye"

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Abstract

Art works have more aspects than aesthetic pleasures within their contexts. One of this aspects is "social utility" which refers to training and education of society.

At that manner, poetry has a special character in training process. Especially in Turkish Classical Poetry a special kind of poem named "Nasihat-nâme" can be seemed in this term. An important representative of this kind is Nabi who lived in 17th century. He wrote a mathnawi called "Hayriyye" aiming at telling certain truths having both religious and universal aspects.

In this study, it is aimed to present the role of art works within the process of education and training by using couplets from Nabi's Hayriyye and other poems.

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1. Introduction

The problem about the function and objective of artwork has been an important issue being discussed since the existence of it. Although it has been subject to various criticisms and accepted as inaccurate by large masses nowadays, "social utility" principal is still one of the most important subject matters. In this sense, the role of art and artwork on training of society is to be handled in the context of Classical Turkish Literature and within the sample of Nabi's mathnawi named "Hayriyye".

Nabi has been a willing educator by the philosophical and sagacious subjects he instilled in his poems. In general in his all poems and in a more particular base in Hayriyye, he has insisted on the matters to be paid attention in social and personal life and he has given recommendations about the behaviour types necessary for being both a better society and rightmost individuals.

The reason for using poem form in training, educating and advising can be connected to the psychological innate inclination of people towards art and artwork. Usage of different methods in education field is the main indicator of a quest continuing for a more efficient education process. Most poets lived before Nabi had also aimed to educate society by the means of a more enjoyable and original instrument instead of a monotonous and boring process. In this manner artwork has been considered as an agent for reaching the target in education and teaching mechanism. The answer of whether education process by poetry has been successful or not, can be achieved from the fact that mathnawi tradition, beginning with "Kutadgu Bilig" which is counted as the first sample of didactic mathnawis seen in Turkish society written by Yusuf Has Hacib in 11th century, had continued until the end of 18th

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century. The reality that versing is more memorable than prose has been mentioned in the couplet below in Hayriyye by Nabi:

*Tîz ferâmuş olunur nesr suhan
Nazm ammâ ki ider devr-i dehen (Kaplan, 2008: 260)*

In the couplet which expresses that a discourse written through prose can be forgot easily, it is stated that a discourse written through versing is to be more memorable by going the rounds.

Although the worldview of Islam Civilisation, principals of it about science and the conditions necessary for both individual and social development have been instilled by a great deal of artists in their works, those have been treated in a more intensive and systematic way by Nabi. There are a lot of couplets written about both general moral rules and religious doctrines within the framework of religion and sufism, positive sciences such as medicine, agriculture and social sciences like rhetoric and euphemism.

2. Training through poetry

2.1. Morals education

Social ethics, benevolence, thriftiness and generosity have been accepted as good conducts in both Islamic and universal moral norms. Therefore, Nabi has given advices for internalizing those good conducts.

*Hande-rûlk eser-i rahmetdür
Türş-rûlk sebab-i nefretdür (Kaplan, 2008: 222)*

In the couplet, necessity for being always debonair and kind has been advised by stating that debonairness is a result of God's mercy whereas sullenness is a behaviour recalling people's abomination.

*Kimseye virme huşûnetle cevâb
Lutf ile izzet eyle hitâb (Kaplan, 2008: 227)*

Again in this couplet it has been pointed out that when a person talks with somebody, he should bespeak with kindness and gentle rather than anger and fury.

*Gadab u hiddet ü kîn gösterme
Kimseye çîn-i cebîn gösterme (Kaplan, 2008: 220)*

As in the couplet before; it has been mentioned that one should avoid behaviours like anger, fury and hostility and also avoid scowling against anyone.

In social life, there are certain precautions needed to be taken for people's living together in a peaceful atmosphere. One of the most important ones of them is reducing the discrimination of welfare level arising from social stratification to the least point and thus being able to balance between rich and poor. Hence Nabi has expressed the matters of obligatory alms and charity which are the most predecessor subjects of Islam as well.

*Eyleme ketm-i hukûk-ı fukarâ
Senesi geldügi dem eyle edâ (Kaplan, 2008: 192)*

In the couplet above, it has been pointed that alms and charity are the basic rights of poor and due to this, their rights must be given in adequate times.

*İtmeden yig nice câmi ta'mîr
Ki elünden ola bir gürsine sîr (Kaplan, 2008: 194)*

It has been stressed in the couplet that feeding a hungry person has been accepted as a more virtuous act than repairing lots of mosques.

One of the worst habits threatening the social peace is alcohol and drug addiction. These two harmful objects hinder the mental and physical improvement of people and thus construct a big threat for the society which is consisted of persons. In Hayriyye, necessity of avoiding those harmful objects has been emphasized.

*Halk içinde sebab-i nefret olur
Kati bî-hürmet ü bî izzet olur (Kaplan, 2008: 230)*

In the couplet, it has been claimed that drinking not only damages the human body but it is an action to arise hate of people as well.

*Ârızî keyfe sakın olma zebûn
Olma âlûde-i berş ü afyûn (Kaplan, 2008: 232)*

It is stated in the couplet above that temporary pleasures have no any utility for people and because of this; one shouldn't get involved in hashish and similar materials.

Lie and gossip have been counted as the worst behaviour kinds by not only the religions available in the world, but also by universal moral norms. In the communities where lie and gossip are widespread, trust crisis among people and depending upon this social unrest emerge. Necessity of avoiding absolutely from these kinds of behaviours which can destroy the social integrity has often been mentioned in Nabi's couplets.

*Kizbdür asl-ı fesâdât-ı umûr
İrtikâb itmez anı ehl-i şu'ûr (Kaplan, 2008: 245)*

In the couplet in which lie's being the basis for malice existing in all activities has been mentioned, it has been emphasized that any rational person does not apply to such a bad act.

*Koparur fitne vü âşûb u cidâl
Gâh olur belki mü'eddî-yi kitâl (Kaplan, 2008: 301)*

Again related to lie, its being a bad habit provoking instigation, disorder, fight and a dangerous conduct being able to cause even murder have been stated.

*Varduğı yirde sükût eylerler
Sakinun geldi münâfık dirler (Kaplan, 2008: 301)*

In the couplet, notifying the situation of ones gossiping which is also a bad habit as lying, people's stopping their talks when a gossip arrives beside them and their emphasizing to be careful by saying that coming person is a factious have been set forth.

2.2. Positive sciences

Nabi has proved to be an intellectual of his era for repeating the importance of education at every turn in the couplets where he has spoken of science and reading in general.

*Sa'y kıl ilm-i şerîfe şeb u rûz
Kalma hayvân-sıfât ol ilm âmûz (Kaplan, 2008: 198)*

In the couplet above, by emphasizing the need for studying honourable science all the times, virtue of being a learner has been put forth by likening the ones being far from science to animals.

*Cehle Hak mevt didi ilme hayât
Olma hem-hâl-i gürûh-ı emvât (Kaplan, 2008: 199)*

Here it has been reminded that God defines illiteracy as death whereas science as life and due to this fact it has been pointed that one shouldn't be together with the group of the dead.

*Al kitâbun ele sedd eyle derün
Olmasun hâric-i derden haberün (Kaplan, 2008: 244)*

In this couplet which defines books as the best friends it has been expressed that one should be dealt with reading books and in a sense close the doors to the external world for tending to his own internal entity.

*Okı târîh u hikâyât ü kısas
Virür insana mezâyâsı hisas (Kaplan, 2008: 245)*

This couplet has emphasized the use of learning history and lives of legendary persons and also stated that by doing this one could get lessons from the events and the merits of historical persons in the stories being read.

When giving advices to his son for learning medicine which is one of the most important sciences, Nabi has emphasized the importance of agriculture and husbandry in terms of survival of people.

*Tıbdur akvâ-yı mühimmât-ı fünûn
Anı münkir degül illâ mecnûn (Kaplan, 2008: 305)*

Nabi has defined the science of medicine as having the most crucial things within itself and claimed that one couldn't deny this reality as long as he has not been a madman.

*Çok fünûn görmege muhtâc tabîb
Her fünûndan ola bir nebze nasîb (Kaplan, 2008: 305)*

Medical doctorship has been claimed to be a quite hard occupation in the couplet and thus it has been recommended that every doctor should have certain knowledge about every sciences.

*Ömrden olmag için ber-hurdâr
Olmaya hiç zirâ'at gibi kâr (Kaplan, 2008: 264)*

Nabi, who has touched upon the necessity of dealing with agriculture, has stated the importance of agriculture in the couplet above.

Learning foreign languages have been a work of which significance has been accepted in all ages for a global culture formation. Nabi has expressed the need for learning Arabic and Farsi which had a great importance especially for the education system of Ottoman society within the 17th century.

*Arabî bilmeyicek iş bitmez
Fârisî ârife tenhâ yitmez (Kaplan, 2008: 258)*

By pointing to the necessity of learning two crucial foreign languages of the era, it has been stated that knowing Farsi alone couldn't be enough and as long as one didn't learn Arabic he would stay inefficient, both at the point of reading and comprehending the positive sciences and in order for social sciences to be able to get analysed.

*Evvelâ hikmet ü hey'et lâzım
Nahv ü sarf u Arabiyyet lâzım (Kaplan, 2008: 305)*

As mentioned in the previous couplet, the significance of learning Arabic has been touched upon again in this couplet and need for learning “sarf” (conjugation) and “nahiv” (syntax) which are the basis of Arabian grammar, has been remarked.

2.3. Meaning, discourse, poem and music

Since Nabi has been a poet he has often emphasized the importance of poetry and meaning in both discourse and poem. He has also stated the necessity of avoiding from prating and mentioned that any discourse should have a useful side causing seminal ideas in audience. Additionally he has talked about music related to poetry. He has pointed to not only the musicality within the contexture of poem, but also listening to music itself which provides a relaxation for people psychologically.

*Kohusuz lâleye benzer o suhan
Ki ola lafzı tehi ma'nâdan (Kaplan, 2008: 260)*

In this couplet where a discourse lack of meaning has been likened to a scentless tulip, it has been tried to be explained that every discourse can only be appreciated by its meaning within its context. A scentless tulip attracts people's attention thanks to its visual beauty but when it is smelled by anybody and understood that it has no scent its beauty declines. A discourse despite its all stylistic perfection is not liked either, unless it has a certain meaning.

*Vüs'at-ı âlem-i ma'nâyı kıyâs it andan
Lafz-ı mücmelde ider cilve mufassal ma'nâ (Bilkan, 1997: 1106)*

In the couplet above which has been written about discourse and meaning within it, phenomenon of meaning has been claimed to be spread to a very wide sphere and its being able to be given in a very short sentence has been presented as the indicator of this situation. In this couplet, subjective characteristic of meaning has been pointed and thus one of the first propositions of modern hermeneutic has been put forward.

*Teveccüh itmez idüm şî're Nâbiyâ bu kadar
Beyân-ı sırr-ı hikem olmayaydı mazmûnı (Bilkan, 1997: 1104)*

In this couplet where Nabi has addressed himself, he has accounted for the background of his tendency towards poetry as its having the power at explaining the most virtuous discourses from the tersest way thanks to the poetic imagination system it has. In fact, this couplet has stood for a brief poetics of him. By this couplet Nabi has mentioned his inclination to poetry for its being an instrument at telling virtuous discourses and in a sense, educating people rather than its being seen as an aesthetic phenomenon.

*Getürür şî'ri usûliyle nagam pervâza
Murg-ı nazmun olur âvâz-ı nagam bâl ü peri (Bilkan, 1997: 1111)*

Here, poem has been described as a bird and its being read according to a certain mode as its wings and it has been argued that as in every kind of sciences, there have been some rules and styles about reading and melodising poem. Thus reading it in a certain mode has been claimed to make poem fly like a bird.

*Mûsikî hikmete dâ'ir fendür
Bilene bilmeyene rûşendür (Kaplan, 2008: 255)*

In this couplet, music has been defined as a science connected with wisdom and so it has been distinguished from other science branches. Humankind can have certain knowledge about any science only by studying. However, music has stood a more intuitive character in terms of its appealing to heart rather than mind. Hence, everyone has been able to get share of it at a certain rate whether he has knowledge about it or not.

*Komaz âyine-i hâtırda gubâr
Nagme-i çeng ü ney ü mûsikâr (Kaplan, 2008: 254)*

In the couplet where the positive effect of music on human psychology has been mentioned, tunes of harp, reed flute and reed have been affirmed to relieve people by removing the annoyance from their hearts.

By attracting notice to the process of self-knowledge which is one of the most important aspects in personal development of humans, Nabi has emphasized the necessity for riddling the mystery of one's own existence for an eternal inner tranquillity.

*Ara bul kendüni bil kimsin sen
Ta sana ola dü âlem rûşen (Kaplan, 2008: 203)*

The couplet, where the necessity of learning the nature of one's own existence before attempting to comprehend the mysteries of both physical and metaphysical universes, has confirmed the reality which had been expressed in the couplet below by Yunus Emre, the great poet of 13th century.

*'İlim 'ilim bilmekdür 'ilim kendin bilmekdür
Sen kendüni bilmezsin yâ niçe okumakdur (Tatçı: 73)*

As can be seen, the great poet Yunus who had lived four centuries before Nabi, had also given recommendations about science and self-knowledge of people and the first step on the way of science had been mentioned as one's knowing and perceiving himself.

Nabi, in a couplet available in his divan, has given clues related to self development and presented a representative example which has showed that one should take confident steps for reaching his goals and then he should keep his situation at the reached point.

*Çenârı pây-mâl eyler kedû-yı tîre-baht ammâ
Rehâ bulmaz çenârün pençesinden zarf-ı dâmânı (Bilkan, 1997: 1105)*

In the couplet, quick development of a squash blossom in a season and climbing over plane tree and at the end its withering have been dramatised. Here, squash blossoms have represented hasty people who had been successful in reaching the peak but had not been able to maturate in the levels of development. On the other hand plane tree has symbolised patient people who had passed all life stages by slow and sure foote. Eventually the one to be permanent at the point reached is to be plane tree, that is, mature person.

3. Conclusion

On such an occasion that in the field of education and training countless alternative methods have been debated daily, function of poem as an educational agent has been tried to be set forth by examples from the poems of great poet Nabi who had grown in the tradition of Classical Turkish Literature. In the light of the examples given, it has been demonstrated that poem has been a functional phenomenon rather than an agent for pleasure and thus it could be thought as an entertaining educational instrument in the processes of both personal and social training.

Certainly, for utilizing from this functional side of poem, rendering it applicable within the framework of contemporary educational methodology by the contributions of experts is to be inevitable.

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